Connecticut Department of Transportation
State Project No. 0007-0250
Replacement of Traffic Signals along U.S. Route 5/Route 15 (Berlin Turnpike)
Towns of Berlin, Newington and Wethersfield
Virtual Public Informational Meeting
October 14th, 2020 – 7:00 P.M.
MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live

Report of Meeting

In attendance: There were approximately 28 people in attendance, which accounts for people attending on both MS Teams Live and on YouTube Live. It is unknown if there were other Town or public officials in attendance due to the meeting being held virtually.

Presentation: The meeting went live at 6:45 p.m. with an informative introduction slide for attendees to view before the event began. The official presentation stared at 7:00 p.m. and began with an introduction from the Department's Project Engineer Jay Lockaby, who covered the process for how attendees could interact with the project team. Matt Blume, the Department's Project Manager, Janet Keiser, the Department's Consultant Engineer and Jason Boice from the Department's Division of Rights-of-Way then gave an approximately 25 minute presentation on the project details.

The presentation covered the following items:

- The location, project limits and details about the corridor of the Berlin Turnpike
- Existing traffic signal condition
- Purpose and need to replace the traffic signal infrastructure along the corridor
- Advanced traffic signal control technology being implemented as part of the project
- ROW impacts, project cost, project schedule and construction impacts

Comments and Questions: Questions regarding the new traffic technology and the specific pedestrian features were most prominent. The comments/questions are summarized below:

1. Email question: Why aren't the rest of the intersections through Berlin to Meriden on the Berlin Turnpike included in this project?

   Response: Matt Blume responded that the rest of the signals along the Berlin Turnpike will be replaced under a subsequent project that lags about 18 months behind the subject project.

2. Email question: When will the project construction be completed?

   Response: Janet Keiser responded that construction is anticipated to take about one year and be completed in the Fall of 2022.

3. Email question: What can be expected during construction?

   Response: Janet Keiser responded that there may be short term lane closures during off-peak traffic periods. All driveways for businesses and local streets will remain open throughout the

construction phase. Also, all existing traffic signal operations will be maintained during construction.

4. Chat question: What is required for vehicles to have emergency vehicle and snow plow detection capabilities? Is it in place now?

   Response: Janet Keiser responded that in order to have Connected Vehicle (CV) technology with the emergency vehicles and snow plows, roadside units will be installed at each intersection that will communicate with corresponding on board units that will need to be installed on each vehicle. Jay Lockaby added that any existing emergency vehicle pre-emption equipment that currently exists will be relocated to the new traffic signal equipment and that it is the municipality's responsibility to own and maintain the existing pre-emption equipment.

5. Email question: Will the municipalities be financially participating the subject project?

   Response: Matt Blume responded that there is no local financial participation as part of this project. Design and construction are being funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds.

6. Chat question: Will sidewalks be installed along the Berlin Turnpike as part of this project?

   Response: Janet Keiser responded that continuous sidewalk will not be installed along the length of the Berlin Turnpike but that pedestrian crossings, including marked crosswalks, ADA compliant sidewalk ramps and pedestrian pushbuttons will be installed. Matt Blume added that the project was initiated with the intent of upgrading the signal technology and keeping the State's traffic signal system in serviceable condition. Adding sidewalk construction is outside the scope of the project and would add large project delays and cost increases such as due to ROW impacts and utility relocations. There are additional opportunities through alternate funding sources through the regional planning organizations for the municipalities to install sidewalks.

7. Chat question: What efficiencies should be expected from the traffic signal improvements?

   Response: Janet Keiser responded that the goal of the project is to improve mobility for all users through the corridor. Adaptive traffic signal control and upgraded vehicle detection will allow the traffic signals to be more responsive to changing traffic conditions. Communications will allow the Department to more actively monitor real time conditions. Pedestrian features will provide for more safer crossings of the Berlin Turnpike to allow for better pedestrian efficiencies.

8. Email question: Can anything be done to improve traffic on the Berlin Turnpike before the project is constructed?

   Response: Matt Blume responded that the timings and operations have been optimized to the greatest extent possible within the limitations of the existing traffic signal equipment.

9. Chat question: Will the pedestrian signals have audible countdown?

Response: Janet Keiser explained the operation of the accessible pedestrian signal (APS) equipment that will be installed as part of this project. APS will have audible chirps and messages for pedestrians that may be visually impaired.

Conclusion: The meeting ended around 7:45 p.m. after all questions were answered. Attendees were reminded to fill out the survey and that the comment period would be open until October 28th for anyone wishing to submit additional comments or questions to the project email address or phone number.